

# **Frederick County Board of County Commissioners Fire and Rescue Advisory Council Charter**

## **Preamble**

The Board of County Commissioners of Frederick County, Maryland is committed to providing our community with effective fire, rescue and emergency medical response services. In order to strengthen fire and rescue system management, the Board has established the Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Council as an advisory body to the Chief of Fire and Rescue Services and the Board of County Commissioners to promote the perpetuation of a unified combination volunteer and career fire and rescue system to serve the citizens of Frederick County, Maryland.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Council is to provide a functional management structure that ensures that input from volunteer, career and citizen stakeholders is provided and considered during the policy making and policy review process and to keep stakeholder representatives engaged in the management of a countywide fire and rescue system.

## **Definitions**

**“Board”**- The Board of County Commissioners of Frederick County, Maryland.

**“Chief of Fire and Rescue Services”** – The Director of the Division of Fire and Rescue Services, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to serve as the system wide Chief.

**“Career staff”** – An employee of the Division of Fire and Rescue Services.

**“Advisory Council”** – The Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Council.

**“Company” or “Companies”** – Independent, non-profit corporations officially recognized by the Frederick County Board of County Commissioners to provide fire, rescue or emergency medical services in accordance with the policies, procedures and laws of the County of Frederick, Maryland.

**“County”** – The Frederick County Government.

**“Division”** – The Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services.

**“Local funds”** – Any County Government revenues dedicated to fire, rescue, and emergency medical services.

**“Volunteer”** – An individual who, without salary, performs fire, rescue, emergency medical, or other related services.

**“Volunteer Chief”** –Operational head of a company

**“Volunteer corporation”** – See “Company or Companies”

## **Policy**

The Board of County Commissioners is committed to providing the citizens of Frederick County with competent, efficient and effective fire, rescue and emergency medical services. Responsibility for the provision of these public safety services in Frederick County rests with the Division of Fire and Rescue Services and the volunteer corporations of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue system.

The Board believes that fire, rescue, and emergency services should reflect: cost-effective service provision; recognition and promotion of general public welfare; accountability for service levels and resource use in a manner required of all public programs; fair representation and communication of all views regarding these services; and adequate response to projected growth within the County. These objectives will be achieved through a combined volunteer and career system, as endorsed and supported by the Board, defined by these essential characteristics:

- ◆ Mutual and cooperative delivery of fire, rescue and emergency medical services through a combined system of volunteer corporations and career staff employed by the County.
- ◆ Recommendations to the Board from the Chief of Fire and Rescue Services, with the advice of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Council regarding fire, rescue and emergency medical service levels, system policy, standards and agreements.
- ◆ Development and revision of fire, rescue and emergency medical operational procedures. The Chief of Fire and Rescue Services is responsible for all system-wide operations and, with the advice of the Advisory Council shall establish procedures and guidelines to implement Board policies.
- ◆ The Board of County Commissioners maintains ultimate approval authority over all policies and procedures and will exercise this authority whenever it deems necessary.

Service delivery must be provided on a countywide basis and must be characterized by uniformity in emergency response performance and in the application of operational regulations and procedures. The Board recognizes and respects the contributions of volunteers, which have resulted in the protection of life and property in Frederick County and vital and generous private support for essential public services.

The County will vigorously support the continuation and expansion of volunteerism as a means of providing fire, rescue and emergency medical services in a cost-effective manner by encouraging the participation of qualified volunteers.

## **Goals**

The purpose of this charter is to promote the achievement of the following goals with respect to the provision of fire, rescue and emergency medical services within Frederick County, Maryland:

- ◆ Protection of Life and Property - Provide cost-effective, equitable, and responsive services to the citizens of Frederick County, including adequate response times, effective fire and rescue incident supervision, adequate staffing, effective distribution of personnel and apparatus and timely adaptation to changing service needs. All organizations and participants comprising the fire, rescue and emergency medical system shall share responsibility for continuously improving their effectiveness and efficiency.
- ◆ Volunteer Participation - Involve volunteers in decisions related to the operation of the fire-rescue delivery system through representation on the Fire - Rescue Advisory Council and its associated committees.
- ◆ Career Participation - Involve career employees in decisions related to the operation of the fire-rescue delivery system through representation on the Fire - Rescue Advisory Council and its associated committees.
- ◆ Citizen Participation – Involve citizen consumers in decisions related to the operation of the fire-rescue delivery system through representation on the Fire - Rescue Advisory Council.
- ◆ System Practices - Promote continual improvement in the capabilities and job performance of volunteer and career members through state-of-the-art training and promote the highest caliber of ethical and professional conduct of volunteer and career members.
- ◆ Accountability - Maintain accountability to the Board of County Commissioners for effective service delivery, sound management practices and the responsible use of public funds.
- ◆ Operations and Administration - Maintain effective service delivery levels while efficiently managing associated costs of administrative and operational expenses, including apparatus, facilities and equipment. Effectively manage human resources, purchasing, maintenance, training and other programs.

### **Fire and Rescue Advisory Council**

The Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Council shall serve as a policy review and advisory body to the Chief of Fire and Rescue Services and the Frederick County Board of County Commissioners. Fire and Rescue Advisory Council members shall consist of representatives of fire and rescue system stakeholders and non-affiliated citizens of Frederick County appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for a specified term of office.

### **Composition of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Council**

1. The Fire and Rescue Advisory Council shall consist of a total of thirteen (13) members, nine (9) voting and four (4) non-voting, all of whom are entitled to participate in all Fire-Rescue Advisory Council meetings. The nine (9) voting members shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

2. The nine (9) voting members shall include:
  - Five (5) fire-rescue volunteer representatives
  - Two (2) career firefighter/paramedic representatives
  - Two (2) citizen representatives - not affiliated with fire-rescue services

All voting members appointed to the fire-rescue advisory council must be full time residents of Frederick County, Maryland, or its municipalities.

3. The four (4) non-voting members shall be ex-officio members of the Advisory Council :
  - A designated member of the Board of County Commissioners
  - The designated Jurisdictional Medical Director
  - The Chief of Fire and Rescue Services
  - President of the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association
4. The ex-officio members of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Council have the right to attend and fully participate in the business of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Council by virtue of their positions, but shall not have the right to vote or hold an elected office of the Advisory Council. Ex-Officio members may set agenda items, initiate discussions, receive the input, advice and recommendations of the Advisory Council and communicate with the Board of County Commissioners on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Council when appropriate.
5. The Chief of Fire and Rescue Services shall ensure that administrative staff support is provided to the Fire and Rescue Advisory Council to support their work as required.
6. Members of the Fire-Rescue Advisory Council that represent the volunteer services shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to serve three-year staggered terms.

Each of the five (5) Advisory Council members that represent the volunteer segment of the county fire and rescue service shall be a current active member of a volunteer fire-rescue corporation that is in good standing within the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association.

One (1) Advisory Council member shall be selected for nomination from each of the five (5) existing fire-rescue battalion areas to represent that battalion's operational companies. There shall be no more than one Advisory Council member from any one volunteer corporation. All such members shall be confirmed by the Board of County Commissioners within sixty (60) days of their nomination.

7. Two (2) members of the Fire-Rescue Advisory Council that represent the career firefighters/paramedics shall be nominated by the board of directors of the Frederick County Career Firefighters and Paramedics Association, IAFF Local 3666, or the bargaining unit for career fire and rescue personnel that is recognized by the Board of County Commissioners. These appointments shall be for a three year staggered term. These members are subject to confirmation by the Board of County Commissioners within sixty (60) days of their nomination.

8. Two (2) at-large citizen representatives to the Fire-Rescue Advisory Council shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for a three year staggered term. Neither of these two appointees shall be affiliated with the Frederick County Fire and Rescue system in any capacity other than as a consumer.

One (1) of the citizen representatives shall be a fulltime resident of the City of Frederick, Maryland and one (1) citizen representative shall be a full time resident of Frederick County, Maryland.

9. A Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected annually by the Advisory Council from among the voting members.
10. A simple majority of the voting members of the Advisory Council shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority vote of the quorum shall be required to adopt any action.
11. Members on the Advisory Council serve at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners and can be terminated by action of the Board of County Commissioners, with or without cause at any time.
12. The Fire and Rescue Advisory Council as an advisory body serves at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners and the Advisory Council may be abolished at any time by formal action of the Board of County Commissioners.

#### **Advisory Council By-laws**

The Advisory Council shall function under set by-laws detailing the Advisory Council's operating rules, regulations and administrative procedures. The by-laws shall include at a minimum; a standard meeting agenda, procedures for the conduct of meetings, description of officer duties, procedures for the election of officers, appointment cycle of voting members, terms of office for all voting members, advisory council rules of order and the structure of various committees that the Advisory Council may deem needed to accomplish its goals. The Fire-Rescue Advisory Council by-laws may be revised from time to time as necessary by a super majority vote of the Advisory Council voting members, which shall be seven (7) votes.

#### **Independent Fire and Rescue Companies**

The independent volunteer companies recognized by the Board of County Commissioners are authorized to provide fire, rescue and emergency medical services as a component of the Frederick County Fire and Rescue system, as provided in this charter, other agreements between the County and the Companies, applicable law and Countywide policies, procedures and regulations. Specifically, the public safety functions of the companies shall include: fire suppression and related activities; fire prevention activities; and rescue and emergency medical services.

The independent volunteer companies shall have one designated chief officer responsible for the day-to-day operations of each company. Volunteer chiefs shall support the efforts of the Chief of the Fire and Rescue Services and are required to uphold and enforce the policies and procedures of the County fire and rescue system.

Volunteer chief and company officers shall operate as part of an integrated career-volunteer chain of command established by the Chief of Fire and Rescue Services in consultation with the Fire and Rescue Advisory Council.

Each company shall provide annually to the Advisory Council a current listing of all operational and administrative officers, board of directors, and other information as may be requested. The Advisory Council shall be advised in writing of changes to a given Company's operational and administrative officer positions within thirty (30) days of such change.

All independent companies shall follow the countywide policies, procedures and guidelines established by the Chief of Fire and Rescue Services, in consultation with the Advisory Council. Failure to comply with system policies, procedures, rules, regulations and guidelines may result in punitive action by the Chief of Fire and Rescue Services and/or the Board of County Commissioners.